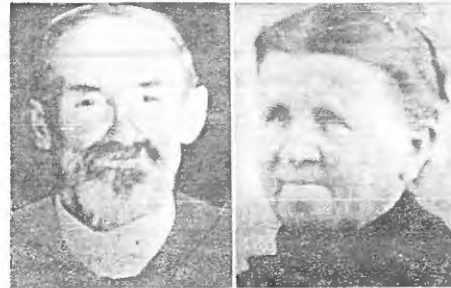


# WILLIAM SAMUEL BETHERS AND PHEBE HANNAH McMILLAN

(1862-1874 Heber Pioneer)



William Samuel Bethers was born to Zadock Stergeous and Sarah Collins Bethers on May 18, 1843, in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois. The family was acquainted with Joseph Smith.

When three years of age, he with his parents and family were with the 50-wagon train of Captain Joseph Outhouse in 1852, on their way to Utah. They settled in Provo on September 22, 1852. The mother and children were ill with measles while crossing the plains.

After developing a small farm at Provo, the father returned to Council Bluffs, leaving the mother and boys to care for the farm and endure pioneer hardships and the grasshopper plague. Later he returned and took his wife and sons back to Iowa.

When men were being recruited for the Civil War, Billie Bethers took volunteers to St. Joseph, Missouri, but Billie didn't enlist. He returned to Utah with his brother Mahlon, who went on to Nevada, while Billie came to Heber to live with his sister, Nancy Smith, and her husband, Ephraim Smith.

Billie served in the Indian wars and was a Blackhawk war veteran.

As a young man, he freighted East with supplies, first with ox teams, then horses, bringing immigrants West. On one of these trips he saw a young girl, Phebe Hannah McMillan, camped with her family near Ft. Bridger. She was the oldest child of Daniel and Janett Davis McMillan and was born at Liverpool, England. Her parents were staunch Catholics until hearing the LDS gospel. Phebe and her sister, Mary Ellen, had come with their parents, in 1863, in the old packet ship "Cynosure," with the 125th company, organized by George Q. Cannon. After six long weeks of rough voyage, they arrived at New York City on October 4, 1863. Phebe walked all but one-half day of the distance to Utah.

At Ft. Bridger, too, she noticed Billie Bethers and both seemed to know they were meant for each other. They didn't become well acquainted till quite awhile later. Phebe became his wife on September 14, 1866.

They lived at Wanship and Heber while Billie worked on the railroad coming into Utah. In the spring of 1874, Billie took up a homestead near the mouth of Daniel Canyon and together they developed a fine farm, building three homes—first, a dirt-roof cabin, then a frame home, and finally a two-story brick home. He worked with Hiram Oaks in surveying a canal to bring water from Strawberry Valley to the farms of the settlers along Daniel Creek.

One winter he, with John Jordan and John Bethers, rescued a group of 25 people from the East, who were trying to cross Strawberry Valley in the deep winter snows and bitter cold. He and other families on the creek took care of these people until their wagons could be brought out in the spring and they could be on their way.

Billie purchased a grain binder, a horse-power and then a steam-power thresher, with which he and his sons did much custom work.

He was supervisor of the Daniel Canyon road sixteen years, when all such work was done with picks, shovels, teams, scrapers and wagons. He served as trustee and treasurer of the school board in the early history of Daniel, and on the jury when the county seat was in Provo.

He was second counselor to Bishop P. H. McGuire when the Daniel and Buysville

Wards were combined. He always was a faithful worker in Church organizations. He died October 7, 1926, at the age of 83.

Phebe always worked in the Church auxiliaries in Liverpool and in Utah. She was a kindly and generous person and taught her children to always be honorable and true to their faith. He had the gift of healing.

They were the parents of 14 children. Their second child, a boy, died when a year old. Another baby boy lived only one day.

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DANIEL BIOGRAPHIES

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of pork. They also enjoyed venison if a deer came in sight. Among the workmen, Uncle Billie Bethers became almost a legend. His hands shook very badly, but he was a crack shot. When deer would come in sight he would pick up a rifle, and while his companions would wonder if he could ever keep the weapon still long enough to shoot, he would aim at his prey and always get it. Tradition has it that he never missed. Light-hour days were unknown to the canal workmen, and they labored from dawn to dusk, and then spent the evenings around camp.

## THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

On off to report your personal affairs, Owing:

James C. Smith, Esq.,  
Secretary of the United States,  
Washington, D. C.  
Dear Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst., and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Yours, very truly,  
J. C. Smith

The official homestead papers for William S. Bethers who was the first white man to establish a permanent home in the Daniel area. The document bears the signature of President Chester A. Arthur and is dated November 15, 1881.

fires spinning tall tales and workmen's yarns. All their wages were in stock in the irrigation company.

Part of the canal route required a 1,000 foot tunnel through the divide into McGuire Canyon. George Muir took the contract to drive the tunnel, and sublet the work to James and Andrew Lindsay. One started from the east end and the other from the west. When they met, the west end was a foot higher, which caused many problems. During Spring run-offs silt would settle at this point and cause the water to back up. Cave-ins were also a problem in the tunnel, and usually dangerous to clear out.

Three difficult years of sacrifice and labor were required to build the three-mile Strawberry Canal, but by 1889 it was delivering some 33 second feet of water into the Daniel area. More than \$6,000 had been

expended in bringing this water into the valley. However, those who engineered the feat looked with pride at the first irrigation water brought across mountain ranges from the Colorado watershed into Wasatch County. In later years, skilled surveyors who looked over the canal said that even though Mr. Oaks and his associates had used crude equipment, the canal was one of the best surveyed mountain ditches ever built.

Another canal, the seven-mile-long Willow Creek Canal, was finished in 1894 at a cost of about \$15,000. Then in 1922 the Strawberry, Willow Creek and Daniels Canyon canals were incorporated into the Daniel Irrigation Company.

The canals served well for many years with only minor repairs and rebuilding. However, by 1947 it was getting difficult to keep the ditches open, so the Daniel Irrigation Company proposed expenditures of more than \$7,000 to put in cement pipe through the tunnel, which has virtually eliminated problems there. The \$7,000 was raised by assessment in two years.

In 1953 the Daniel company combined the Strawberry and Willow Creek canals, put a new dam in the river and eliminated sections of the canal that traveled through steep ledges by putting the water through a siphon under Strawberry River from one hillside to the other. Cost of these improvements was some \$54,500, partly financed by a \$31,000 loan from the Utah Water and Power Board.

Because of this water, fine hay, grain, pens and other crops have been raised on the rich bench ground in the Daniel area.

From the beginning, the people of Daniel depended upon irrigation waters to help in their struggle for the necessities of life. The cooperative irrigation projects also helped cement the early settlers into solid community life. Food from the earth was not easily won, and bread literally came by the sweat of their brows. They worked hard together, and to balance their lives they turned to community socials and to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A combination meeting house and school building was among the first permanent buildings to be erected in the area.

Daniel is located about four miles south of Heber, and was known to white men as early as 1858. The first white man to establish a permanent home in the area was William Samuel Bethers, a native of Illinois, who had come west with the Church. He established a homestead at the mouth of Daniels Canyon in March, 1874, and built a log house for his family. This modest dwelling, with only a dirt floor and dirt roof, was the first of three homes that he built for his wife, Phebe McMillan Bethers, and their 14 children.

Others began homesteading in the area and by 1885 there were sufficient persons to organize a branch of the Center Creek Ward. Joseph Jacobs was named as the first presiding elder and served until a ward was organized in 1898.

A sister community to Daniel was Buysville, named after Edward Buys, who settled there in 1870. Buys and his wife, Celestia Bromley Buys, were called by leaders of the Church to help build up the Wasatch area. They left their home in Bountiful, Davis County, and moved to Charleston where they built the first shingle roofed house in that community.

Later they moved east to Big Hollow which soon became known as Buysville. As other families came to the area a meeting house and school room was built. The Buysville Branch of the Church was then formed as part of the Charleston ward.

Because all of the early settlers in Daniel and Buysville were Latter-day Saints, it was natural that community activities would center around the Church. Dancing was considered the most popular activity, though sports events were not neglected. No matter how hard the day's work had been the people still found refreshment in dancing parties, even if they had to walk from Daniel to Buysville to join in the fun.

Buysville was a favorite spot for dancing because of the fiddling prowess of Ed Buys, the first settler. Picnic dances were popular social events and had their moments of hilarity.

At one of the picnic frolics, Tom Murdock was fiddling gaily for the dancing when he gave a yell, "Here, come take care of this pie." The amazed onlookers stared as they saw him jiggling a pie on the toe of his shoe, keeping time with the music.

The surprised baker of the pie mustered only a weak, "Why that's a good pie."

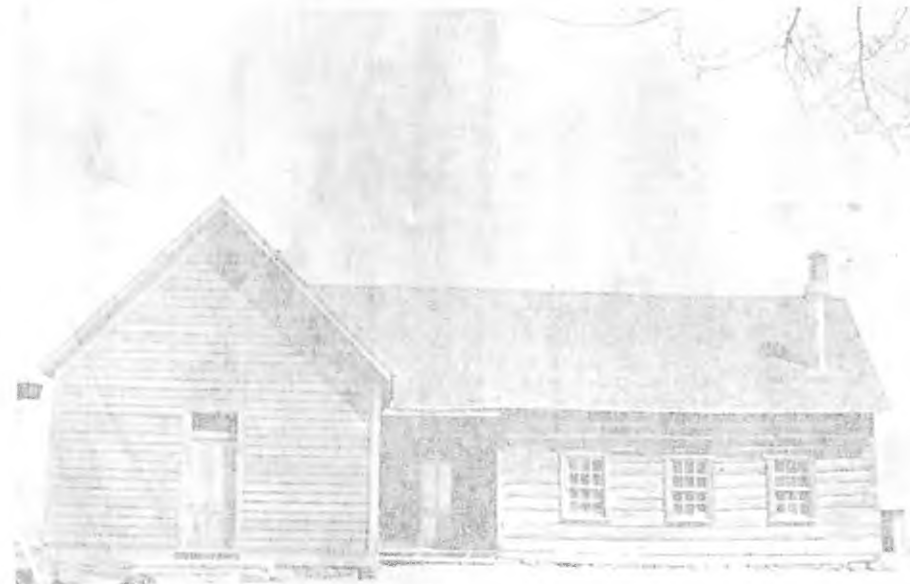
Superintendents of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Assn have been: James J. Howe, William S. Bethers, James J. Howe, Joseph F. Swain, Walter Plummer, Dean Bethers, Leonard J. Howe, John M. Thacker, James W. Orgill, Grant Casper, Earl George Jacklin, Kenneth Allred, Ray Kynaston, Dean Hector and Ray Cummings.

Presidents of the Young Ladies and later the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Assn. have been Annie Bell, Margaret Howe, Sarah C. Bethers Price, Rachel I. Orgill, Marie Anderson Erickson, Mary Elizabeth McDonald, Esther Anderson Howe, Josephine Plummer, Emma Clegg, Lacy Swain, Phoebe Remund, Ethel Watson, Zella Carlen, Delores McDonald, Stella Gordon, Lola Carlile, Ruby Clegg, Elnora Casper, Isabelle McGuire, Nelda Duke, Elaine Broadhead and Norma Thompson.

Chairmen of the ward genealogical committee work have been Joseph C. McDonald, Thomas J. Orgill, Albert F. Bethers, Orson McGuire, Allen T. Bethers and Lloyd Jacobsen.

## Religious Life

Activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the mainstay in the lives of those who settled in Wasatch County. Many had come to the area from foreign lands because of their membership in the Church and the desire they had to be with the main body of saints. Though they worked hard in winning the land, they found ample opportunity to meet together and worship the Lord, their God.



The old Daniel Ward meeting house, which served also as a school. This photograph was taken in 1903.

Church buildings were among the first structures erected in the Wasatch area, and the Daniel settlement was no exception as branches of the Church were soon established in Buysville and in Daniels Creek.

The Buysville area was settled about 1870 as an outgrowth of Charleston. The Church history was closely identified with the Charleston Ward until 1896. In the fall of that year, Bishop Nymphus C. Murdock of Charleston appointed William McGhie as presiding elder in the Buysville Branch. Meetings were held in the district school house.

Two years later the branch was organized as the Buysville Ward.